

Final Feedback FAQ

The Select Board will vote on November 22 to approve one of two maps and welcomes feedback from residents on the two maps until Monday, November 15.

Please provide feedback on:

- which map you prefer and why
- any specific areas on the map that create local concerns

[Limited Change Map:](#)

- Makes only necessary changes to re-balance population
- Changes 10 precincts (those precincts elect all Town Meeting Members)

[Recommended Map:](#)

- Re-draws several precincts in anticipation of future growth and to create the opportunity for increased diversity and fair representation in Town Meeting.
- Changes 11 precincts (those precincts elect all Town Meeting Members)

[Interactive Map](#)

click the Layers icon in upper right to see the data



You can review a [presentation explaining each change](#). Note that changes to any boundary also results in changes to the adjacent precinct, which requires additional population adjustments. The ability to make minor changes is potentially possible, but major changes are unlikely. All feedback, however, helps the process and will be reviewed.

The 2nd page of the FAQ is a summary of the RWG's process, definitions, and goals intended to assist residents as they review the presentation and the proposed changes.

How to Submit Feedback

Online: [Google Form](#)

Email: TownClerk@town.arlington.ma.us

Mail: Town Clerk, 730 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA 02476

Drop Box: Town Hall drop boxes are located in front of the building or in the parking lot off Academy St.

Timeline

- 11/15 Envision Arlington Civic Engagement Group Zoom Forum for Q/A
- 11/15 Final day to submit feedback
- 11/22 Select Board approves one map
- 11/23 RWG submits the map to the Secretary of State
 - Secretary of State produces official legal documentation of the proposed precinct plan
- 11/29 (tentative) Select Board votes to approve the formal documentation
- 12/2 RWG submits signed documentation to the Secretary of State for approval
- 12/4 final deadline to submit

Explanation of Fair Representation Goal

Race Data: The law requires all levels of government to protect racial minority voting rights; precinct lines must not dilute or consolidate racial minority residents in precincts that limit their ability to elect representatives. Arlington has a low percentage of racial minority residents and their voting rights are also considered in the larger context of the state districts. The state has drawn new maps that increase the number of districts that have a majority of BIPOC residents. Both proposed Arlington maps make sense when looking at race data. There are no significant flaws or advantages guiding a choice between the two maps on that one point.

Other Data: Since Town Meeting is responsible for approving Town and Zoning Bylaws that affect housing, parking, transportation, business districts, and density, the RWG felt it was pertinent to consider local factors that impact local representation. Arlington often uses data collected locally or American Community Survey data to inform plans and proposals. The data reviewed with respect to drawing precinct lines can be seen in the [interactive map](#) and includes:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Household income | Parcel density |
| Rent vs own | School district lines |
| Zoning maps/types of housing | |

Process: The data filters on the interactive map vary in the level of detail and not all correspond with the census blocks (the smallest unit and how precinct maps must be built). No one map, which involves hundreds of small trade-offs, can ever align the boundary lines with all the data. The RWG used the data to see general trends as a guide to understanding the relationships between census blocks in any given area.

Goal: Create new precincts (where possible) that do a better job of grouping similar census blocks to build precincts that have a coherent profile. Some precincts will be largely single-family homes, with higher median household incomes and lower density. Other precincts will be largely comprised of apartment buildings, two-family homes, with households who earn a lower-income. The majority of precincts with the latter profiles are clustered around the Mass Ave Corridor. By adjusting precinct lines to group residents of specific demographic cohorts together, communities from those demographic cohorts are more likely to elect Town Meeting Members who represent their particular interests.

Fair Representation: Some precincts include a wider range of the various demographic profiles: Precinct 8 (now and in the Limited Change Map) mixes high and low-density census blocks and the majority of Town Meeting Members live in low-density blocks. If this occurs in multiple precincts, a hypothetical debate about specific parking solutions for high-density areas might not fairly represent the needs of the high-density neighborhoods. The Recommended Map creates more opportunity to elect Town Meeting Members from parts of Arlington that are currently under-represented.

Impacts: Residents in census blocks that change precincts may also be assigned to different polling locations that may be more or less convenient. Polling locations can be adjusted by the Select Board at any time. Redrawing precincts also affects the Finance Committee which has representatives from each precinct. A number of seats would need to be reappointed in January to prepare for the 2022 Annual Town Meeting.